

Appln. No. 10/019,992

Attorney Docket No. 10541-929

**II. Remarks**

Reconsideration and re-examination of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is herein respectfully requested.

Claims 1-6 are cancelled. Claims 7 and 13 have been amended. No claims have been added. No claims have been cancelled. Accordingly, after entering this amendment, claims 7-18 remain pending.

**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102**

Claims 7 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,570,356, issued to Williams, et al. (Williams).

Claims 7-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,113,733, issued to Peterson, et al. (Peterson).

Williams discloses an apparatus for use in a processing line through which a strip travels longitudinally. The apparatus functions to join the trailing end of a first strip portion to the leading end of a second strip portion along a transverse line of juncture to form a continuous strip length. The apparatus includes a trimmer for removing the weld flash from opposite faces of the strip at the line of juncture, a notcher for removing weld flash at the line of juncture at opposite side edges of the strip and including means for removing the abrupt shoulder formed at the line of juncture at at least one side edge of the strip when a relatively narrow first strip portion is welded to a relatively wide second strip portion.

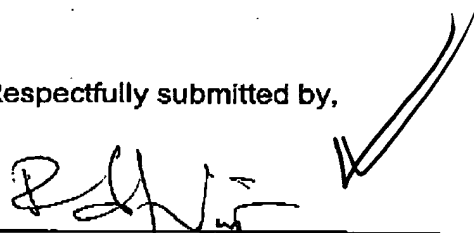
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**Conclusion**

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present form of the claims are patentably distinguishable over the art of record and that this application is now in condition for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted by,

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